

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM: BETWEEN SYNCRETISM AND *TANTULARISM*

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Abstract

This article has several objectives: first, to discover the background of religious pluralism in Javanese society, notably among the communities in Ketanggi; second, to recognize religious practice in Ketanggi; and third, to explore the religious attitudes of Ketanggi people towards religious pluralism. This article is based on field research carried out in Ketanggi sub-district of Ngawi, East Java, which is inhabited by the communities with different religious backgrounds. This paper argues that religious commitment among Ketanggi people is partly based on 'tantularism', a sort of ethical principle which emerges as a result of the encounters between religion and local wisdom. The reception of Ketanggi people towards religious and cultural pluralism is expressed through the concept of lilo legowo (voluntary reception towards the other) which in turn becomes foundation of religious tolerance in that area.

Keywords: Religious Pluralism, *Tantularism*, and Javanese Culture.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of only a few countries in the world that has the characteristics as a multi-ethnic country. It has around 931 ethnic groups with 731 languages. It is also a country that has fairly strong religious traditions. There are five major religions in Indonesia, namely Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism (Taum, 2006: 32). As a pluralistic country, the potential of conflict is quite high. Various forms of conflict could occur in various forms, such as: conflict between religions, between ethnic groups, between cultures, between tribes, between different interests, between people from different provinces or regions. Conflicts between the followers of different religions usually occur when the norms and religious values harassed by people of other faiths (Pahrudin et al, 2009: 148). It is an inevitability in religious pluralism, the presence of truth claim and the missionary character of each religion had possibility of clashes in the religious life and the emergence of inter-religious misunderstanding became wide open (Komarudin, 1993: 11). Mukti Ali in Rahmat (2004: 20) said that religion is always welcome and experienced subjectively, hence people often define religion in accordance with their own experience and observance. Further he said

that religion is the belief in God Almighty and the laws that revealed to His messengers to the joys of human life in this world and the hereafter.

Malinowski was cited by Karel A. Steenbrink (1988: 23) argued that religion is “wishful thinking” despite the belief of religious truth is considered nihilistic, but still capable of helping people to have a positive sense against frustration and potential in realizing social unity. This function can retain religious integration, integrity and social order so that conflict, mass violence and unrest can be avoided (Fajar, 1998: 187). While Nottingham (1997: 31) said that in terms of the function of society, religion plays a role in addressing the issues that arise in the community that cannot be resolved empirically because of limited ability and uncertainty. Therefore, religion is expected to carry out its functions so that people feel secure, prosperous, stable, and so on. In addressing religious pluralism, some experts came up with concepts regarding religious attitudes, for example, Hans Kung who promoted the idea of global ethics, and John Hick with his global theology. Exclusive thought of globalized religion melted in order to be known by the idea of so-called inclusive theology. This theology emphasizes that all religions are essentially the same; everything is true because without exception, they all teach good things and submission to the Almighty and the Righteous. Therefore, there is no religion at this point is more superior than others.

Culturally the Javanese community is the community that has the identity of either speaking the Javanese language or practicing the Javanese culture despite living outside the island of Java (Koentjaraningrat, 1982: 82). For the Javanese, religion has its own definition and outlook of “*agama ageming aji*” (religion as a means of good deeds and virtue), no matter what religion, it is considered the same because all religions teach salvation. The meaning of the word “aji” is «Queen» which explains that the religion embraced by the King or Queen is the religion of the Community (Damami, 2002: 21). No wonder the Javanese in the past converted to different religions to follow the religion and beliefs of the King or his Queen. In Javanese society, apotheosis and myths of the spirit of the ancestors resulted in the ancestor worship that gave birth to the customary law and the relationships of its supporters. The implementation of the *slametan* ritual, the spirit of the ancestor becomes a guardian for the family members who are still alive. Stange (1998: 12) referred to it as “spiritual loyalty” which is conditioned by the existence of cultural spirit.

The actualization of religious commitment in the form of extraordinary tolerance becomes the basis of the spirit of honor, living and practicing all the values of any source which is based on the belief of the Javanese people,

religion is merely a means of reaching an eternal life and an outlook that «*punika agami sadaya sami*» (all religions are basically the same) (Sujamto, 1992: 8). The spirit of tolerance in the religious life is the outlook of the values of Javanese cultural traditions that emphasize on the aspects of morality, harmonization and ethics. Muhaimin (2001) added that the side of morality and ethical harmonization in the Javanese community that needs to be underlined is the nature of a tolerance, accommodating and flexibility of the Javanese community itself. The data obtained from Research, Development and Statistics Agency of Ngawi District in 2009 shows that in Ngawi overall there were 1,382 mosques, 3,960 small mosques, 77 churches, 1 temple and 1 Chinese religion temple. In the Ngawi Sub-district there were 87 mosques, 135 small mosques, 13 churches, 1 temple and 1 Chinese religion temple. The religious pluralism found in Ketanggi Urban Village which is administratively part of Ngawi Sub-district. Religious and ethnic pluralism in Ketanggi is indicated by the existence of places of worship of different religions i.e. the mosques and churches and temples. The Chinese temple in Ketanggi is the only one in the area of Ngawi District. In addition to the existence of a religious pluralism, Ketanggi is also known for its ethnic pluralism, especially in Sido Makmur. Ketanggi Urban Village has grown and developed into the center of Government and economy in Ngawi.

In fact, the study of the Javanese community has been done, not only by Indonesians but also by foreigners. There are scientific works that raised the issue and the theme of the study of the Javanese community that need to be revealed to complement the insight of this paper. An overview of the Javanese community religious life can be found in the work of Clifford Geertz, “Santri, Abangan, and Priyayi in the Javanese Community. Geertz (1981) said that: “(Javanese) Syncretism is clearly visible in the religious life in Java that indicated an influence from the outside. Although animism has been deep-rooted since ancient times, the Javanese successively accepted Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity, then “Javanized” them all. It can be found on the worship of spirits which is still there in the deepest psychological level of the Javanese.

The translation of the works of Niels Mulder (2001) entitled, “the Javanese Mysticism, Ideology in Indonesia” revealed the ideological views of the Javanese Community with its world (microcosm) and the Javanese view of life on the spiritual-religious world (macrocosm). In addition, his other works include “the Javanese Personality and National Development”, published by Gajahmada University Press 1986, reviewed the themes of morality, a way of thinking and philosophy of life of the people of Java, as well as the study of the

relationship between modernization and traditional life, and portraits of national development in Southeast Asia. There is also another work by Paul Stange, entitled "Politics of Attention, a Sense in the Javanese Culture" published by LKIS, Yogyakarta in 1988 reviewing *kejawen* as a text or praxis among the Javanese. The work of Sujamto, "Reorientation and Revitalization of the Javanese View of Life, published by Dahara Prize Semarang 1992, examined the Javanese syncretism, *tantularism*, *Kejawen* and belief in God Almighty.

Research by Herlani (2010) examined the relationship between the strength of character and happiness in the Javanese society, especially about how the strength of character contributed to happiness. Results of the study revealed that the level of happiness of the Javanese people quite high. The strength of character at the same time provided a significant contribution towards happiness at 48.6%, whereas 7 of the strengths contributing to happiness, namely tenacity, creativity, perspective, justice, vitality, curiosity, and forgiveness. Five of the most prominent strengths of character are gratefulness, virtue, population, justice, and integrity. Of a few scientific papers found, none discusses the pluralism of religions and cultures in Ketanggi Urban Village, Sub-district of Ngawi, District of Ngawi. Besides that, this study specifically discusses the Javanese community's awareness about harmonization within religious diversity.

KETANGGI COMMUNITY IN NGAWI, EAST JAVA

Ngawi is located on the western part of East Java Province bordering Central Java province. Ngawi is an area of 1,298.58 km² where about 39% or approximately 504.8 km² is an area of paddy field. In accordance with the local regulations (Perda) in 2004, the district of Ngawi area is divided into 19 sub-districts and 217 villages, where 4 of 217 villages are the urban villages. Administratively, Ketanggi consists of 29 RT (neighborhood association) and 6 RW (ward) with an area of about 80 ha. The population of Ketanggi is about 6,031 with 2,785 males and 3,246 females (Monographic Data, Ketanggi Urban Village, September 2014). Originally, Ketanggi was a village like other villages in Ngawi in general, and in 1950 Ketanggi officially changed administratively from a village to an urban village.

Ketanggi is divided into 6 administrative areas, namely the area of *Kluncing*, *Cabean Lor*, *Cabean Kidul*, *Sido Makmur*, *Sido Mulyo* dan *Krijan*, where each area is headed by an area Chief. In the Ketanggi community, religious and cultural interaction is intensive because of the potential of Ketanggi as a business center in the region of Ngawi in addition to the administrative center of the district. The distance to this village is less than 500 meters to the center of

Government, and as a business center, it offers variety of daily needs for the community of Ngawi that makes Ketanggi a destination for migrants from outside the district of Ngawi.

The business Center in Ketanggi is located along the AR. Suprpto and Sultan Agung Streets which is largely dominated by shops offering a variety of food products, garment and electronics. There are other business centers along the streets of Ronggowarsito and Dr. Sutomo with many shops that carry the everyday needs, such as Alfa Mart, Indomaret, and Delima Store as the Center for wholesale of educational equipment in Ngawi. In addition, the existence of the Grand Market of Ngawi on Mangkubumi Street, Ketanggi contributes to the increasing rate of growth and development of the economy in the region. The existence of the Grand Market as the center of people's economy also contributes to dynamic growth of the economy compared with other areas in the district of Ngawi. The high economic circulation at Ketanggi makes this area the main goal for the investment in the business world. This then triggers the intensity of the interaction between cultures, religions and ethnicities in the region. As a place with different religions, ethnicity and culture, Ketanggi has a unique blend of culture, among local and migrants. With regard to the pluralism of religion of the Ketanggi people, it not only occurs at the level of society, but also at the level of family.

Results of the study found that several families have a different religious background, including the family of Hendrik (aged 57) who live on Mangkubumi Street. Hendrik who was earlier Christian converted to Buddhism. Meanwhile, his kids embraced the Christian religion and Catholicism. Mr. Hendrik said that; "commitment to build an atmosphere of religious life at the family level with harmonious relation based on the belief of the practice of the religious values they observe in order to do the best to a fellow human being» (interview with Hendrik (aged 57 on October 19, 2014). The view the pluralism of religion on society of Ketanggi as reported by Hendrik (aged 57), is about the purity of religious teachings that they profess. Besides that the influence of the Javanese culture that emphasizes on a syncretic attitude lowers the potential conflict. This is not merely rhetorical, but it gives an example in action especially regarding the appreciation of differences including different religions .

Johan Hendrik Caspar Kern in his *"Over de Vermenging van Civaisme en Buddhisme op Java, naa aanleiding van het Oudjavaansch gedicht Sutasoma"* did not use the term syncretism but instead he used the term *vermenging* which means mixture. Meanwhile Gonda called it by the term 'coalition', besides that there are other terms such as blending, fusion and amalgamation. The

term syncretism and Javanese syncretism was used by Rasers who used the term “the Javanese religion” to name the product of mixed religion happening to the Javanese community (Sujanto, 1992: 15). From the explanation, it can be concluded that the harmonious relations between religions in Ketanggi society is not merely the Javanese syncretism but rather a remarkable Javanese tolerance which is based on respect and passion for living and practicing all the values of truth from any source. This spirit is identical with *tantularism*; the source is drawn from Empu Tantular’s *bhinneka tunggal ika tan hana dharma mangrwa* (unity in diversity).

“The pluralism of religion in Ketanggi is not an obstacle to build a relationship in the form of dialog between religious followers, this is because the spirit of benevolence (*sabba Danam Dhamma Danam Svaha*). The spirit of assimilation by ethnic Chinese is done with the realization that what they do is an effort to be part of the Ketanggi community “, (interview with Ali Handoyo (71 years), caretaker of the Sie Hien Kyong Temple, Ngawi on 26 October 2014). The interview above, indicated that the strength of the dialog on pluralism of religions and the ethnic harmonization among the Ketanggi as an attempt on the general understanding of religion as a comprehensive commitment and driving integrative motive that govern all aspects of human life in addition to the Javanese culture that emphasizes on harmony.

Religion is understood and accepted as a unifying factor as proposed by Gordon W. Allport, or in other words how religion serves as a guide, the philosophy of life. This is the way the values of the religious teachings should be implanted into the believer and practiced in life. In Allport’s study, way people observe religion makes religion a philosophy of life that emphasizes on the aspects of compassion called an “intrinsic way of religiosity” capable of creating a harmonious, peaceful and affectionate society. The view of the teaching of religion as teaching for doing good things toward others is observed by the community of Ketanggi, and it is understood and applied in daily life. The Javanese people could not be separated from their society; the community is autonomous and governs the overall life of its participants. *Rust en orde* or peace and harmony of the Javanese which is the basis of morality; It can be found in the relationship between people in their own community (Mulder, 1986: 37).

Harmonization of the pluralism of religion in the society of Ketanggi is supported by the existence of an active role of religious leaders who encourage the religious followers/residents to always do good and to appreciate the differences within the community. Conflict related to

religion indeed occurred in 1980 in Ketanggi but it was triggered by the presence of an internal process of propagation carried out by a certain religious group with a rigid, extreme way of proselytization and tended to be anarchist. The events of the 1980s was not a conflict in the name of religion, but a question of internal religious way of *da'wah* carried out by certain organizations/groups (the results of interviews with Head Ketanggi Urban Village on 20 November 2014).

THE RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF THE KETANGGI COMMUNITY

The community of Ketanggi, in addition to having plural religions, is also ethnically plural. Residents living in the neighborhood Ketanggi are mostly ethnic Chinese settlers who were born and have been living in Java. The teachings of the ancestors of the ethnic Chinese continue to be practiced and preserved orally, though they already adhere to a different religion or belief formerly embraced by their ancestors. Ethnic Chinese ritual practices in Ketanggi are mostly done at the Sie Hien Kyong temple where they still observe the tradition of ritual and belief of the sacred guardian spirit, as well as magical objects as commonly practiced by the Javanese natives who still remain entrenched in the Javanese culture.

The Javanese apotheosis and myth of the spirit of the ancestors resulted in the worship of ancestral spirits that ultimately gave birth to the customary law and the relationships of its supporters. With the ceremonies, they show respect to the spirit of the ancestors that becomes a 'guardian' for families who are still alive. Performing a ceremony or ritual at the sacred places is a religious act which is part of the culture. This activity is based on and driven by the existence of religious emotion, a spiritual vibration believed to be able to move the human spirit. Some experts pointed out that religious ritual activities are the process by which the human soul enters the light of God (Koentjaraningrat, 1985: 144).

Underhill (1992) in Djam'ammnuri (1997: 34) said that the practice of ritual is always addressed to God, no matter how thick the veil being used to understand him and no matter how strangely the disguises people use. The main feature of this service is that there is a balance between birth and inner, because human beings are not just made of intellect or spirit only. Cultural historians believed that the introduction of such tradition is derived from the worship of spirits and the objects. Worship of the spirit is referred to as animism and the worship of the inanimate object is called dynamism. Animism and dynamism is the oldest Javanese society's religious belief. That belief is embodied in the cult of the spirit and strength of

the objects through a petition for a blessing.

Dirk in Sham (2005: 19) mentioned that in rituals, more emphasis is put on the form of the ritual as a strengthening of the social traditions and individual bonds with a social structure of the group. This integration is strengthened and perpetuated through ritual symbolization or mysticism. So rituals are seen as the essential embodiment of culture. It was further stated that the ritual was... *as dramatizing the basic myths and vision of reality, the basic values and moral truths, upon which...the world rests.*

Ritualistic expressions in practice now also can be found in the mix of elements of Islam with the local culture. The example of the most popular and is currently still being debated among Muslims is a prayer for those who have died, done on the 3rd, 7th, 40th, 100th and 1000th day of their death. This ritual in the event a tradition called *selametan*, a word derived from Arabic, namely Islam, *salam* and *salamah* that mean asking for safety and peace, and the ceremony is often associated with the term *tahlilan* or *tahlil* where people read the sentence of *thayyibah, la ilaha illa Allah* together. To the Javanese, especially the Ketanggi community, an outlook that life is filled with ceremonies, both ceremonies related to the environment and sacred ritualistic ceremonies. These ceremonies accompany human life from the early existence in the womb of the mother, birth, childhood, teens, adulthood, until the time of the death in addition ceremonies of everyday activities related to making a living, among others: *kenduren* or *selametan*, *mitoni*, circumcision and so on.

Djam'amnuri (1997: 35) said that the main thing that distinguishes acts of worship by human deeds is intention, or goal, not the deed itself. Here is a more important distinction between ethnic religion and universal religion in expressing religious experience theoretically or intellectually. Ethnic religions emphasize on accuracy and precision of the execution of the deed itself, *opus operantum*, while universal religions give judgment on the inner attitude and intention of individuals as a measure of the purity of faith. Without true inner attitude and intention, the execution of an act of religion would be of no value at all.

The view of the Ketanggi community on the importance of observing religious teachings properly and correctly is an obligation that must be met. On the other hand they also have the obligation to keep alive the traditions in the forms of ritual and ceremony. The synergy between religious tradition and religious attitude of the Ketanggi community is complementary, where it occurs on one side of the religious attitudes that they have supported the formation of religious tradition, while the religious tradition as a neighborhood life also gives the values and norms of religious behavior patterns. Thus, the religious traditions

influence the shaping of experience and consciousness of religion so that religious attitudes can be formed in the community in the environment of certain traditions.

Durkheim argued that religion is the manifestation of the collective consciousness though there is always some other embodiment. God is considered the symbol of the society itself, which as a collective consciousness then transformed into a collective representation. God is the idealism of the community itself which regard it as the most perfect creature (God is the personification of society) and exceeds what is owned by a man. Durkheim argued in this case that there are two things crucial in religious rites and ceremonies. The belief is a thought and the ritual is the action. Religion is a means to strengthen the collective consciousness as religious rites. People involved in religious ceremonies and their awareness about collective consciousness is growing strong. Religious sustainability and atmosphere of religious ceremonies are brought in everyday life, then the collective consciousness gradually grew weaker again. The practice religious rituals in the community of Ketanggi is a means considered to be able to play a role in creating a collective awareness among the society, or in other words the religious ritual they perform is an attempt at re-charging for man to return to his God.

Ali Handoyo (aged 71) said that ethnic Chinese who were born and live in Ketanggi feel that the Javanese tradition, culture and rituals are filled with wisdom and life that co-exist with the attitude of the religious belief that they have the strength to be synergistic virtue in a harmonious relationship between different religious beliefs or ethnicities. Ethnic Chinese living with the local people in Ketanggi still preserve the Chinese tradition, one of which is *gong zhui*, a regular meeting for ethnic Chinese in Ketanggi. The agenda of the *gong zhui* also usually discusses issues of topics related to business. At the final session of the meeting, they usually collect donations that will be used to help residents around them or as an aid for the benefit of other charities in the region of Ketanggi (interview with Ali Handoyo (aged 71), on November 28, 2014)

The explanation above can be concluded that the understanding and practice of religion in the Ketanggi society is similar to what Robert C. Monk said. He explained that religious tradition has two main functions that have multiple roles; first, religious tradition as a force that is able to create stability, harmonization and alignment for the individuals and society; second, religious tradition serves as a change agent in society and individuals, even in a conflict situation. The view and practice of religion in the Ketanggi community took place in a dual function, on the one hand as social stability bring people

closer, and on the other hand as a progressive change movement for improvement of social life (Rakhmat, 2004: 227).

The dialectic process between religion and local Javanese culture that happened in Ketanggi society at least produce a synthetic culture which is the inevitability of history as a result of dialog between religions and the values of the local Javanese cultural traditions. The birth of the ritual expressions with values of the instrument is a local product whereas the materials have content of religious nuances. The relation between religion and culture in Ketanggi does not immediately eliminate the fundamental values of the teachings of the religion they believe. So is the case with the traditions and culture of the ethnic Chinese, where ethnic Chinese community who live in Ketanggi despite embracing the religion of their choice, still maintain and preserve the tradition and culture of their ancestors.

THE RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT OF KETANGGI SOCIETY

The differences that exist in God's creation at the center of the universe is an inevitability that ought to be accepted as a gift to be grateful for. Such things should become more evident in the religious life in the midst of religious diversity as an accepted inevitability and we should be grateful for the gift of God. Ir. Henry Suwanto (aged 53), said that the teaching of the Christian religion (Catholicism) is also similar to other religions. The leaders or religious figures also appealed to the people to coexist with other religious followers because Christianity is taught by Jesus Christ to love one another. So individuals who believe in Jesus, his life must be compassionate to indicate that when there are Christians, they should coexist with followers of other religions without religious dispute (interview with Ir. Henry Suwanto, Chief of the Pentecostal Messenger Church Indonesia, in Ngawi on 10 December 2014).

Basically, human is God's creation so that being difference does not need to give rise to discrimination based on different religion, ethnicity, or status and so on. The desire to live peacefully, side by side between different religious groups is a representation of the desire to live a life meaningful for oneself, a family and a community. As the main motivation for this desire is to be a dignified, honorable and valuable person with activities that focus on the purpose and meaning life. Rohmat (60 years), a religious figure in Ketanggi mentioned that the process of spreading the Islamic values and the process of dialog between religions that is conducive in the long run was done through intense dialog. He revealed that the area around Dr. Sutomo Street previously in the 1980s was a paradise for fans

of liquor. With the intensity of propagation, commitment and hard work of religious leaders, community leaders and neighborhood officials, the Darul Jannah mosque was built for the Muslims there. The Darul Jannah mosque is located next to the Pentecostal Messenger Church Indonesia that was constructed first i.e. around 1986.

The presence of Darul Jannah Mosque, a religious atmosphere of the Muslim community began to surface and activities of drunkenness in the area slowly began to disappear. The construction process of Darul Jannah, which located next to the Pentecostal Messenger Church Indonesia, went smoothly. This was due to the intensive dialog and communication between Ketanggi religious and community leaders as well as neighborhood officials (interview with Rahmat (aged 60)/community elder on November 25, 2014). Damami (2002: 45), revealed that religious diversity as well as the diversity of ethnicity, tribe and nation, should also be understood in a perspective of humanity that coexist in the community of Ketanggi with its distinctness to build a better life together, and its uniqueness should not be seen as a threat to the other followers of religion. As expressed by Damami that there is a view in the Javanese community and its own definition religion as in "*agama ageming aji*" from which the definition of the expression appears. The definition that religion is the basic guidelines of life, meaning that any religious teaching is all good for the safety and welfare of the people living in this world whatever religion embraced being the same because all religions teach salvation. The perception about God in the Javanese community is reflected in a saying *tan kena kinayangapa* which contains the meaning that every time people try to describe or explain about the nature of God, surely they will not be able to describe the actual nature of God.

The view of Ketanggi people in an attempt to reach God is nothing more than a group of blind men trying to describe an elephant. Some of them may touch the tusk, some touching the belly, the tail, or the leg. Each has a different perspective about the nature of an elephant. Being aware of the fact, the Ketanggi community tends to avoid debates on the establishment or beliefs about God and religion. They refuse to say that a certain religion or belief is true and the other false. It is this attitude that becomes the strength of the Javanese community in building harmony, good tolerance in religious life as well as in other fields. Religious harmony in the Ketanggi society can be seen from the harmony of relations between different religions. Among the example set is participation in the construction of places of worship, the celebration of the religious holly days. Participation among believers in Ketanggi is also in the

form of donations of money or other material submitted voluntarily without coercion (interview with Didik, Head of People's Welfare Division, Ketanggi Urban Village, October 25, 2014).

Religious harmony in the society of Ketanggi is the result of hard work of various religious leaders who socialized this attitude to their congregation. The government administrative apparatus in Ketanggi also have also been working with religious leaders with regard to creating harmony with a view of that religion or belief is just one of the ways for an individual or community to achieve life goals, namely to reach the holy nature or heaven. So in other words, all religions are good; all religions teach virtues. This thought or view is used by the Ketanggi apparatus to ensure religious harmony is preserved. Religious figures of Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism socialize the importance of harmonious relation to their followers. Socialization is done in each religious activity conducted by respective religious group. For example, for the Muslims, it is done during the recitation of *yasin*, *tahlilan* at a mosque and *surau* (smaller mosque), the Christians at a Sunday mass or other days at the church, the Buddhists during a prayer ritual at the temple.

Religious commitment on religious diversity in the Ketanggi community is unique representation of the religious figures. It can be seen from the religious commitment of the respective leaders to build an atmosphere of harmonious religious diversity in the area. As Durkheim argued with his phrase "*religion as a societal glue*", although religion is destructive on one hand, but on the other hand it is a vehicle for constructive interaction and commitment to dialog between believers. Dayakisni (2009: 160) said that commitment is a feeling of togetherness and the intention to maintain the relationship. Duffy and Rusbult (1986) stated that people will be more committed to a relationship when: (1) they are satisfied with the results; (2) the absence of an alternative to other relationships that they can enter; and (3) they have invested considerable resources in that relationship (such as time, effort, self-disclosure, reciprocal friendship and shared property).

Speaking of commitment, the community Ketanggi cannot be separated from any social interaction among them, where during the process there is a reciprocal relationship, mutual influence on one side and corroboration of their identity as the Javanese community has a duty to preserve harmony among them. Soekanto defines social interaction as the relationship between persons or between human groups. Social interaction will not be possible if it does not meet two conditions: (1) the existence of social contacts; and (2) communication. According to Glock & Stark in Ancok (2008: 76) there are five differ-

ent dimensions of diversity, i.e, the dimension of beliefs (ideological), dimension of religious practice (ritualistic), dimension of experience (experiential), dimension of the implementation (consequential), and dimension of religious knowledge (intellectual). Religiosity or religious activities not only happens when someone performs the ritual behavior (worship), but also when doing other activities driven by supernatural powers. It means not only activities that can be seen, but also what takes place in one's heart.

The caretaker of Sien Hien Kyong Temple in Ngawi, Ali Handoyo (aged 71) said that the commitment to always maintain religious harmony within a group of a certain religion is urgent, because the bigotry will contribute to nothing but to hostile actions. This perspective is based on the fact the majority of ethnic Chinese are Christians or Confucians, who historically are not natives of Ketanggi. Purwoko (aged 47), Chairman of the Darul Jannah Mosque Ketanggi said that there is something unique about the community of Ketanggi, especially on aspects of cultural and religious diversity. He mentioned the fact that a mosque and a church could exist side by side, indicating that the Muslim community can live next to the Christians in harmony. Ethnic Chinese have blended in and adapted to the culture of local communities of Ketanggi.

At the beginning of the construction of Darul Jannah mosque, there was a misunderstanding triggered by lack of communication especially with regard to the worship activities of the Muslims and the Christians. However, after a dialog was held between figures from the Darul Jannah mosque and the Pentecostal Church, a deal was reached to be able to understand and appreciate each other particularly when each group needed to perform worship (interview with Purwoko on 25 November 2011). In this light, as reported by the religious figures and the administrative apparatus, it reflects that the efforts to maintain stability and harmonization of religious diversity are carried out continuously in the form of commitment and tolerance among religious leaders, law enforcers and community members of Ketanggi. The Javanese culture and tradition that seek harmony has delivered a strong influence on the society of Ketanggi.

The Ketanggi community's commitment in the form of appreciation of the pluralism is capable of preventing the occurrence of religious conflict and proved effective in creating a climate that is conducive to the harmony and pluralism of the religious life within the community. Durkheim described that religion in the form of its adherents' true understanding has a function as social adhesives. The Ketanggi society believes that religion requires its adherents to continue living in peace and harmony. Therefore, it can become a model of how religious commitment that underlies every activity

related to the motion and behavior of the followers is able to bring a peaceful, safe and serene atmosphere to everyone.

CONCLUSION

Study of the dialectics of religion and culture in the Javanese community as analyzed by Dister (1994: 102) who argued that the interactions between culture and religion on the other hand, potentially reduce the values of the sacred teachings of the religion itself. He explained that there is a danger that threatens when religion and ethics are closely combined; *first*, religion and ethics will lose their own intention and idiosyncrasies. Religious intention is associated with God, as association with Him is not the same as that in human life. Moral values are autonomous; *second*, it is a threat when people use religion as a means to assure the socio-moral life runs smoothly but is used by the rulers to maintain the status quo that favors the position of ruler concerned.

In view of the arguments put forward by Nico Syukur Dister above in analyzing what is happening in the process of dialog between religions and ethics (cultural tradition) in the Ketanggi community on the one hand what he said is true. The sacredness of the values of religious teachings in community of Ketanggi is arguably biased, reduced by the ritualistic cultural values of Javanese people. The process that occurs between the interest of religious and cultural rituals in the community is typical of the Javanese society in general with the nuances of culture and tradition in religious ritual ceremonies. It takes a deep study and focus on the interaction of culture and religion particularly on religious ceremonies in the Javanese society. The religious commitment in the community of Ketanggi on the one hand is influenced by an outlook based on the teachings of religion, but on the other hand, such commitment has been heavily shaped by the Javanese culture. There are concerns when religion and culture are combined in such a way, as described by Nico, it tends to eliminate intention, religious distinctiveness is considered something that is "taken for granted" with ethics based on human culture. Even in the other perspective, religion can be used to ensure social stability and to maintain the status quo for the authorities.

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that the process of intensive dialog between religion and culture in Ketanggi society and the Javanese society --in general-- has created a condition where religion at some point serves as a formal legal basis for the cultural traditions of the community. Such circumstances could give rise to bias and the reduction of religious ritual behaviour or the Ketanggi society as a representation of Javanese itself. The

dialectics of religion and culture in the Ketanggi community tends to strengthen the cultural legality as a driving force of the collective consciousness when compared to the power of religious social morality.

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